

Kentucky Historical Society Executive Committee
Friday, July 15, 2011
Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History
Frankfort, Kentucky Historical Society

Members present: Bill Bartleman, Fred Brashear, J. McCauley Brown, Dawn Browning, Sheila Mason Burton, Marion Forcht, Mike Hammons, Derrick Hord, John Kleber, Ruth Korzenborn, David Lee, Karen McDaniel, Brian Mefford, Nancy O'Malley, Lowell Reese, Robert Rich, Nancy Smith, Sue Speed

Members absent: Verna Fairchild, Mike Mullins, Patti Mullins, Wayne Onkst, Renee Shaw, Louis Stout

Guests present: Marty Pinkston (representing Verna Fairchild); Lindy Casebier, Deputy Secretary, Tourism, Arts & Heritage Cabinet; Dana Cox, Director KHS Foundation; William Dexter, General Counsel, Tourism, Arts & Heritage Cabinet; Andy Beshear, Sharon Potter, Kathy Knotts (representing KentuckyShow); Kelly Dudley, Office of Policy and Management, Legislative Research Commission

Staff present: Scott Alvey, Jody Blankenship, Pam Brookman, Lisa Cleveland, Russell Harris, Keith Jackson, Louise Jones, Trevor Jones, Darrell Meadows, Linda Redmon, Elizabeth Van Allen, Kent Whitworth, Theresa Young

WELCOME

During lunch, Mr. Wayne Onkst, State Librarian, Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives, was recognized as a new Executive Committee member representing the Archives and Records Commission. He replaces Dr. Terry Birdwhistell. Mr. Onkst was unable to attend the board meeting.

President Robert Rich called the meeting to order in the Brown Forman Room at 1:00 pm.

Darrell Meadows, Director of Research & Interpretation, introduced Dr. Elizabeth Van Allen, Associate Editor, and Mr. Russell Harris, Senior Associate Editor of the *Register*. Ms. Van Allen announced that for the third year in a row KHS is the recipient of the prestigious Leadership in History Award of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History. This year's award is for two special issues of the *Register* – "Abraham Lincoln and Kentucky" and "Kentucky and the Contested Legacy of Jefferson Davis" both published in 2010 during the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Mr. Harris explained that these research based publications were recognized to join scholars and the public in the common search for understanding and hopefully a result of better shared history.

Mac Brown moved to approve the April 15, 2011 minutes with a second from Sue Speed. The motion was approved.

Robert Rich welcomed special guests Sharon Potter, Andy Beshear and Kathy Knotts from the KentuckyShow and explained that leadership staff and KentuckyShow board and administrators have been in discussion for nearly two years with the intention of KHS becoming a second venue for the KentuckyShow. Ms. Potter distributed copies of the most recent KentuckyShow project proposal document used to raise corporate funds. First produced twenty years ago, the new KentuckyShow is a high definition, 35 minute multi-media experience by Donna Lawrence. Using interviews and research for content, the KentuckyShow is about all regions of the commonwealth. The threefold mission of the Show is (1) education – to incorporate the Show into the social studies curriculum for school children, (2) as a first rate tourist attraction, and (3) as an economic development tool. She invited all board members to see the Show in at the Kentucky Center for the Arts.

Andy Beshear, board chair of the KentuckyShow contracts committee, stated the KentuckyShow is a 501c3 entity that is interested in a partnership with KHS to reach more audiences and school children. He said the Show touches on the importance of all areas of Kentucky. The partnership would be structured to allow KHS to continue its normal operations and the KentuckyShow board would focus on the production updates scheduled for 2013-2014. He commented that KHS, as a partner, would have input on an advisory committee during the revision process.

In answer to a question on the number of people who have seen the KentuckyShow, Kathy Knotts responded approximately 50,000 visitors have viewed the Show. The economy and other timing factors contributed to fewer visitation numbers than estimated in the business plan. A new initiative has been developed to reach more children who cannot afford to pay admission.

Mr. Rich noted that KHS is only in the beginning stage of a potential agreement.

Following their presentation Ms. Potter, Mr. Beshear and Ms. Knotts left the meeting. The discussion on the Kentucky Show reconvened later in the meeting.

Board Committees

Finance Committee – Sheila Mason Burton reported the FY2011 general fund operating budget closed with a zero balance and no deficit. Three proposed “additional items” for the next state biennial budget due October 1, 2011 include 1) Re-design of KHS website, (2) Development of digital media lab and (3) Commonwealth Hall renovation. These are wish list items that if approved would be added to the baseline budget.

Linda Redmon commented that a new financial overview report will be presented at the next board meeting.

Mr. Whitworth noted that KHS provided a budget plan for a potential three and five percent reduction for the current fiscal year operating budget but has not been directed to implement the plan. He thanked the senior leadership team for their productivity and for managing the fiscal situation.

In response to a question about the KentuckyShow and the budget, Mr. Whitworth answered the KentuckyShow is not included in the next biennial budget request.

Personnel Committee – John Kleber thanked Pam Brookman for reporting to the Personnel Committee on the KHS vacancies. Dr. Kleber reported there are “a lot of activities and a lot of vacancies.” Currently, there are eight vacancies in the process of being filled, four full-time and four part-time positions. These rank from being interviewed next week to being under consideration by the Governor’s Office. The four full-time vacancies are Senior Curator, Archivist I, Administrator I, and Program Coordinator. Two recently hired employees include a Volunteer Administrator and Librarian Technician. Two resignations have been accepted and three reclassifications are being pursued because of certain new duties and the need for title changes. Information on the writing and implementing a new KHS handbook will be reported on at the next board meeting. The committee reviewed a new employee assessment form that will focus on duties of all KHS staff with an emphasis on the growth of individuals and of the society and not for disciplinary actions.

In response to a question on the eight personnel vacancies, Linda Redmon described the “snapshot” of personnel positions that is taken on a certain date before the biennial budget process by the Governor’s Office. Vacancies that are in the process of interviewing or with an approved request for exemption are allowed to be included in the baseline budget request. Two high priority core positions (senior curator and library administrator) are being filled due to resignations. Some part time positions are funded through federal grants and not from the general fund.

Governance Committee – Mac Brown reported the committee reviewed a potential licensing agreement with the KentuckyShow but did not recommend any action. The committee agreed to pursue the annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director. A questionnaire will be sent electronically to all board members and senior staff to rate the performance of the Executive Director during the past year. Different questions will be sent to the board and staff with the information kept anonymous. Mr. Brown will compile the data and share the results with the governance committee, the Executive Director and the full Executive Committee. He asked board members and senior staff to complete the questionnaire form with constructive comments. The process should be completed in September and reported to the board in October.

Nominating Committee – In Committee Chair Renee Shaw’s absence, Kent Whitworth stated the committee will meet in August to solicit new board members and officers to be elected at the annual meeting. He encouraged member to suggest names as potential nominees. The slate will be presented at the October board meeting, but does not have to be approved by the Executive Committee.

Action Items

KentuckyShow – A lengthy conversation took place regarding KHS becoming a second venue for the KentuckyShow. Robert Rich remarked that financing and licensing of the KentuckyShow product to use the KHS facility in exchange for a payment is being reviewed by both parties.

Kent Whitworth stated KHS has not used technology and media to its fullest extent in adding value to the visitor experience. Being a second venue would build capacity to present high-end multi media presentations and enhance functionality of the public spaces at KHS. The cost to retrofit the Kentucky Brown Forman Room is approximately \$750,000 with an additional \$160,000 for enhancements to the exterior/foyer/hallway and theatrical lighting. Through a public/private partnership, the governor’s office has expressed interest in proposing a \$456,500 general fund appropriation in the executive branch biennial budget. Proposed additional funding would be \$250,000 from private sector, \$50,000 through a KHS Foundation planned gift (with Foundation board approval) and earned income from increased KHS admissions (additional \$2 per person @ 50,000 paying visitors the first 18 months to repay an internal loan from KHS Foundation) for a total cost of \$906,500. KHS would pay a negotiated fee per Frankfort viewer of the Show.

Mr. Whitworth stressed that the Executive Committee must feel comfortable with staff pursuing the opportunity before any action will be taken to follow up with the KentuckyShow board. In order for the KentuckyShow board to pursue legislative approval in the next General Assembly session, there must be potential agreement with the Executive Committee with the concept and principles of the partnership.

In response to a question on admissions, Mr. Whitworth stated it is anticipated that by spring 2013, KHS admission fees would be raised from \$4.00 to \$8.00 and youth admission from \$2.00 to \$4.00. The scholarship program will need to double to cover the number of school children. There would be one admission price for visitors to choose whatever experience they wanted on the campus.

In response to rentals and revenue generating programs, Mr. Whitworth replied that the Brown Forman Room will continue to be a multi-purpose room and it would only be necessary to use one half of the room for the Show. KHS would be committed to the KentuckyShow being available at least two times daily. KHS first considered retrofitting the introductory area of Kentucky Journey exhibition, but later determined that the Brown Forman Room is a more logical and functional space for high definition productions.

In response to questions regarding KHS long term planning, Mr. Whitworth acknowledged that the KentuckyShow may not be the perfect choice and that senior staff would prefer something much more interactive. Nevertheless, in his opinion it does fit into the strategic plan. It is a dynamic production and is a means of getting into the multi media arena. At this point, KHS does not have the funds necessary to create a similar production and the KentuckyShow board has indicated they would lobby for this project to be included in the Governor’s next budget.

Mr. Lowell Reese emphasized his concern on the fairness of the KentuckyShow to all regions of the state. He feels it is critical for KHS to negotiate the right to edit due to the controversial mountaintop removal scenes in the Show. Mr. Reese stated eastern Kentucky is the only region in the state that is portrayed negatively, particularly with strip mining and if a partnership is executed, KHS must have the right to edit.

Ms. Sue Speed remarked that the KentuckyShow could provide an opportunity for discussion and dialogue on sensitive issues in the state.

Dr. John Kleber commented that the Show focuses on tourism versus Kentucky history, which led to further conversation.

If KHS is a second venue, the Show may be attractive to legislators and state government officials for drawing different audiences. Mr. Whitworth explained that KHS would only agree to three years in a licensing agreement.

Staff member Scott Alvey advised it would be very difficult to change the film before the proposed revision date of 2013/2014. For KHS to create its own production, the costs could double.

Following a motion by Brian Mefford and seconded by Bill Bartleman, the board authorized KHS to further “fact finding” with the KentuckyShow board and to report back to the Executive Committee before any agreement is approved. The motion passed.

Mr. Whitworth reminded the members that in order to include funding in the next General Assembly session, the KentuckyShow board would need to make legislative contact this fall. Robert Rich advised that he would notify the KentuckyShow board that the KHS Executive Committee is interested but not ready to support the concept at this time. It was recommended that all board members make an attempt to see the KentuckyShow.

Seasonal hours – Kent Whitworth reported that the staff recommends adoption of seasonal hours for the KHS campus to close to walk-ins from December 11, 2011 through March 9, 2012 except on second Saturdays in January and February. Groups of 10 or more with one week advance notice would be accommodated. Efforts are underway to communicate the seasonal hours to target audiences, especially researchers and educators.

A discussion was held on public perception of the seasonal hours. The informal tracking taken during the seasonal hours of 2010-2011 revealed a small number of formal complaints. The phonathon was used as an opportunity to talk individually with the public about the importance of collections and online resources. A more compelling explanation is the seasonal hours are more about priorities than budget cuts. Mr. Whitworth referred to the handout “by the numbers” which showed significant accomplishments made during December 2010-March 2011.

A motion was made by Mac Brown and seconded by Nancy O’Malley to adopt seasonal hours from December 11, 2011 through March 9, 2012. The motion passed.

Sheila Mason Burton asked that KHS communicate the decision formally to the Kentucky Genealogical Society.

Staff Reports

Folklife Program – Kent Whitworth explained that as a part of the budget reduction plan, significant staff adjustments are necessary. The decision of the KHS staff is to transition the folklife program out of KHS and the Ky Arts Council by June 30, 2012. The decision is based not only on budget reductions, but philosophically with the core functions and organizational priorities outlined in the KHS Strategic Plan. The three staff positions are not general fund supported in the current fiscal year. KHS formally approached Western Kentucky University to consider transfer the program into their folk studies program. Executive Committee officers and leadership of the Ky. Arts Council board have been very involved in these discussions. **Robert Rich clarified that Board action is not required at this point. Mr. Rich went on to state that KHS Executive Committee approval will be necessary if administrative responsibility of the program or folklife collections are transferred to WKU or to another organization.**

Dr. David Lee, Dean of the WKU College of Arts & Letters, stated that Western Kentucky University is receptive to the proposal but is under the same type of budget constraints as state government. The WKU folk studies program is strong and the transition into its program would be positive. He could not commit at this time but stated the proposal is being considered.

Mr. Whitworth stated the last Kentucky Folklife Festival took place in 2007 and that KHS and KAC are not in a financial position to hold another Festival. He reminded the Board that the Folklife program encompasses more than the Festival. Current areas of emphasis include community scholars, traveling exhibitions, and collections. In fact, KHS recently was awarded a one-year federal grant to catalog the Kentucky folklife collections. He added that a new folklife exhibition will open in September in the Keeneland Gallery.

Arsenal – Trevor Jones reported the Kentucky Military History Museum is on schedule to open November 11, 2011 in conjunction with the governor’s initiatives to honor veterans. He announced the Department of Military Affairs has pledged \$440,000 for interior renovations and an additional \$320,000 for exterior renovations in phase IV during the next fiscal year.

KHS Foundation – Dana Cox thanked Marty Pinkston with the Kentucky Department of Military Affairs for their support to the arsenal project. She reported on grant funding received during the past year and thanked the board for 100% participation in the annual fund ending June 30, 2011. The total raised for FY 2011 annual fund was \$201,072. With an unprecedented 1,000 gifts and 934 donors, the Foundation is building a stronger donor base. The KHS Foundation endowment fund is \$3.1 million and the Toyota education endowment campaign is now complete.

Old Business

Partner organizations – Kent Whitworth updated the board on identifying five partner organizations for FY 2012 as outlined in the strategic plan. The five partnering organizations for FY 2012 will be University of Kentucky, Kentucky Museum and Heritage Alliance, Western Kentucky University, KentuckyShow, and Kentucky Genealogical Society.

Boone Day/Hall of Governors – Scott Alvey spoke on the June 4 Boone Day events with the opening of the new Toyota Hall of Governors exhibition. With the exception of Governor Ford, all former living governors were present and participated in a panel discussion titled “Through the Eyes of Kentucky Governors” moderated by Bill Goodman to be aired on KET.

New Business

Based on a request by board member Louis Stout, Kent Whitworth reported that discussions with Mr. Stout, Sheila Mason Burton and Darrell Meadows are ongoing to develop a long term strategy for KHS to strengthen its relationship with the African American communities throughout the commonwealth. No formal program has been developed but opportunities will be promoted by KHS.

Distinguished Service Award – Upon a recommendation by Kent Whitworth, a motion was made by Robert Rich and seconded by Sheila Mason Burton to approve a distinguished service award to Dr. Terry Birdwhistell for his service on the Executive Committee and his long term dedication to the Kentucky Oral History Commission. The motion passed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.